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WHO FAR'S BEST.

PRICE ONE SHILLING STITCHED.

by Major Gen. Warren

[Entered at Stationers' Hall.]

W H O L E S A L E



[BRITISH MUSEUM]

WHO FARES BEST,

THE
K
CHRISTIAN

OR

THE MAN OF THE WORLD?

OR THE

ADVANTAGES OF A LIFE OF REAL PIETY

TO A

LIFE OF FASHIONABLE DISSIPATION.

BY A MARINE OFFICER.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:

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1792.

WHO EARNS BEST

C. D. L. S. I. A. N.

THE NAME OF THE WORLD

NOT A LITTLE OF THE WORLD



AT A LITTLE OF THE WORLD

STANDARD EDITION

LONDON

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P R E F A C E.

WHEN the Author began to write the following pages, he had two objects principally in view. The one, to detect and expose the malicious intention of the grand deceiver of mankind, in one of his infernal schemes, by which he hoodwinks and ruins his thousands; artfully insinuating, through the mouth of his numerous agents, that truly religious people are a set of the most despicable, ignorant, melancholy, wretched beings that ever existed on the face of the earth; wholly incapable of enjoying the rational pleasures of life; or of filling up their places as members of society, with any credit to themselves, or honour to their country. Whereas he well knows the
very

very reverse is the case; that they really are the most rational among men, whose religious joys, and solid, though interrupted, happiness in time, as well as the glory that awaits them in eternity, he daily envies: and dreads nothing so much as letting his own subjects perceive it, lest they should thereby be induced to leave his service. Would to God this feeble attempt, as an instrument in his hands, might be made useful in opening some of their eyes!

The other object in view was, to procure, if possible, a little assistance towards the support of the Gospel in the Church of Christ, at Strood; by appropriating the profits that might arise from the sale of this pamphlet wholly to that purpose. If any of these ends can, in the smallest measure, be obtained, the Author will think himself amply rewarded, and his time well employed. But should he succeed in nei-

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ther,

ther, which he fain would hope will not be the case, the purchaser of this book is sure to be no loser; for supposing he should not like its contents after he has read it, he will not have to lament that his money was altogether thrown away; as he may rest confidently assured, that, through the divine blessing, it will be wholly employed to the very best of purposes—the cause of God and of truth.

STROOD,

WHO

WHO FARES BEST, &c.

HORATIO, EUGENIO.

HORATIO.

WHAT always the same thing over again? Morning, noon, and night, whining and praying over some old Puritanic book or other? Surely you must lead a most unhappy, melancholy life, Eugenio!

EUGENIO.

That's as you think, Horatio; but long experience has sufficiently convinced us both, I hope, that neither your judgment nor mine, has any pretensions to infallibility. I fancy, were our separate enjoyments, hopes, fears, and future expectations, put into an even scale, and this question impartially answered, Who fares best, You or I? the balance would be greatly in my favour.

B

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

You'll find it a very hard matter, indeed, to make me believe that; for really I have no possible conception that a life like yours can ever be a happy one.

EUGENIO.

Suppose we compare notes this afternoon, and try if we cannot decide the matter.

HORATIO.

With all my heart, provided you don't puzzle me with too much of your enthusiastic stuff, which you know I never could rightly comprehend. Let us have to do with plain matters of fact, and I'll see you out like a man of honour, plant the palm of victory on Eugenio's brow, if I cannot first secure it for my own.

EUGENIO.

That's just like my worthy friend; and what I fully expected from him; or, believe me, I would not so readily have entered the barren field of controversy, where so seldom any real good is to be found. Would disputants always act thus, how much more profitable would it be for themselves, as well

well as for those who read or hear their disputes. Let who will gain the day, I'm well persuaded, we shall part as good friends as when we began.

HORATIO.

Well, and where shall we begin? At the pleasures of a life of melancholy contemplation? I presume this is your forte.

EUGENIO.

No: I'd rather attack you on your own ground, and try first, which of us enjoys the rational gratification of our different senses most: because I know 'tis a very false, but too prevailing opinion, that we christians do not, and must not, enjoy the common blessings of life, which our senses are capable of affording us; whereas, in reality, we are the only persons in the world, who have the true relish of these blessings.

HORATIO

Pray, how do you make that out? I'm sure I rose this fine morning without one distressing thought, had a delightful ride over the heath, enjoyed the fresh air, returned with a keen appetite to breakfast,

and relished a dish of fine flavoured tea with as high a goût as you or any man ever did; and can you say more?

EUGENIO.

My dear sir, the cows in that meadow enjoyed as much as you did; and I fancy a little more: they never in all their lives had a distressing thought to disturb them, and that's more than you can say; they had the first taste of the pure air, that exhilarated your broken constitution this morning, and perhaps a much higher relish for the food they enjoyed.

HORATIO.

Thank you, kind sir, for your easy introduction to this polite assembly; I hope you will make one of the number, or inform us of the very superior advantage you have over every body else. Pray throw it into the scale, and let us see if there's any weight in it.

EUGENIO.

In the first place I enjoyed every thing you mention, with all the keen sensations of genuine delight that health, peace of mind, and a good appetite, could

could inspire; but what certainly added a double relish to these enjoyments, and decidedly gave me the advantage over you, and the animal creation, was the sweet and transporting sensations of love and gratitude which I felt glowing in my breast to the gracious Author of these unmerited mercies; from whose hands I received them, not only as kind tokens of his present paternal affection *for me*, but as sure pledges of his future and eternal regard. This transporting thought roused every faculty of my soul to sing aloud in his praise; and while the divine principle of love was in exercise, I partook of his temporal blessings, with a kind of heavenly relish, far beyond any thing you ever did, or possibly could enjoy without it; for let the sensualist rave and riot as he pleases, it will ever remain an undeniable fact, universally asserted by reason, revelation, and long experience, that none can view the delightful scenes of nature, with divine appropriating ecstasy, or enjoy with true filial gratitude the returning blessings of providence,

“ But who, with filial confidence inspired,
“ Can lift to heaven an unpresumptuous eye,
“ And smiling say—My Father made them all.”

HORATIO.

How do you know I never enjoyed this as well as you?

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EUGENIO.

EUGENIO.

I am pretty sure you never did; and you will acknowledge it too, when you have answered me this question. Pray, did you ever ask a blessing from God, or give him thanks for any one breakfast you ever had?

HORATIO.

Really I cannot remember I ever did. You know it is not customary to do it at breakfast.

EUGENIO.

Then I am sure it is not customary with you to enjoy what I did; for how is it possible you could feel any grateful sensations towards God, who never once entered into your thoughts all the while you were feeding on his bounty? And what a mean opinion must you have of that man who regulates his religion by the inconsistent notions of an idle and absurd custom? Is this agreeable to that reason you so much boast of? We religious folks are frequently accused of acting contrary to its dictates; but leaving it wholly to your own judgment, I would ask, who acts most rationally here? He who thanks God
for

for every meal he receives, or he who only thanks Him for one?

HORATIO.

The question answers itself. For if it be necessary to ask God for his blessing on one meal, it certainly must on every one we enjoy.

EUGENIO.

Then pray let us have no more of your foolish customs (of however long a standing) brought in to exculpate the omission of an indispensable duty—But to return from this short digression. I hope you will now give me leave to claim the advantage, I have already clearly proved I have over you; and therefore, without further ceremony, I shall mark it down No. I.

HORATIO.

Stop, stop, my good friend; not quite so fast, if you please. Pray be so good as to explain first what you mean by this divine principle, as you call it, by some fact, figure, or example; or some how or other, so that I may understand you a little better, before you begin to make your notches?

EUGENIO.

Suppose your valuable and much-loved friend in the country (you know who I mean) was to send you a delicious pine from his hot-house, as a mark of his disinterested friendship, and as a pledge of his benevolent intentions to provide for you; would you not enjoy it with a much higher relish, than one you might buy at a fruit shop?

HORATIO.

I think I must, if not destitute of all gratitude.

EUGENIO.

Then so much, and much more, did my pleasure exceed yours this morning. Therefore now please to remember, that by your own determination I have at least gained this one point.

HORATIO.

Well, I think you will not gain the next; for 'tis a pleasure you never taste of; at least I do not remember ever having seen you amongst us. I mean when two or three of us jovial fellows get together over our bottle, sing a merry song, and spend the evening

evening as happy as kings. This is an enjoyment you have no idea of.

EUGENIO.

That is a mistake, Horatio. You must give me leave to inform you, that I have greatly the advantage of you here; having a very just idea of all your pleasures, and a thorough knowledge of the nature of all your enjoyments, from many years unhappy experience: while you are totally ignorant of mine, from having never once tasted of their sweets, or formed one just idea of their true value; for if you had, you would have instantly relinquished your own and adopted mine. But we will once more come to the test, and contrast them together; for, notwithstanding your very sanguine expectations, I am pretty confident of triumphing here also. In the first place, when two or three of my friends meet (you know the most of them), we enjoy every temporal blessing, in moderation, as well and better than you do, having them mixed with the additional pleasure already mentioned, of which yours is destitute. We too sometimes spend an hour in singing, but it is to the glory of God; and I am sure with much more melody and pleasure than you do, if I may judge from what I heard the other night, as I passed by the club-room; the noise that came from thence (harmony there was none), seemed to me more like that
of

of dogs in a kennel, just going to be fed, than the voice of rational beings: and when curiosity prompted me to listen to what was going forward, I found myself the only person silent; and could not, with all my attention, from so many mouths find out the subject of your conversation. If you call this pleasure, Horatio, I totally misunderstand the meaning of the word. Very different indeed is our mode of entertainment: an anxious desire to get hold of truth, excites us to investigate, with the strictest care and attention, every subject we undertake to discuss. Sometimes the precious truths of the gospel; at others, the mysterious nature, attributes, and perfections of the Deity, with his glorious works of creation, providence, and grace; or more frequently what relates to our own conduct as men and christians; verifying the prediction of the royal prophet, "Thy saints shall bless thee. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power." In such delightful employ as this, we constantly reap both profit and pleasure; time flies on silken wings; and sometimes, when we feel the blessed effect of the divine promise, our happy souls struggle, as it were, to get beyond the limits of the crazy tenements to which they are confined. And I will be bold to say, from frequent experience of both sides of the question, that our enjoyments in these rapturous moments as far surpass yours, as the light of the sun does that of a feeble taper.

HORATIO.

My dear sir, you have taken a deal of pains to depreciate my pleasures, and to set off your own with all the flowery language you are master of; but I must not suffer fine words without proof to have any weight in our impartial scale; and must still insist upon the liberty of thinking, that the pleasure I enjoy with my friends is at least equal to the pleasure you enjoy with yours, unless you can bring me plain matters of fact to the contrary.

EUGENIO.

That I can do; and some that you will not dare to say were of a pleasing nature. I love dearly to appeal to matters of fact, when I can come at them. They are the very best arguments in the world. Do you remember the situation you were in last Wednesday morning, when Mac and I called on you? Were we not alone, I should not think of exposing my friend's weakness; but in the present familiar tête à tête, I shall make no scruple to attempt a description of the curious scene, as it will exactly answer every purpose I wish. Between ten and eleven, I think it was, when we entered your room; and from what had been told us the evening before, we were not much surprised at seeing the apothecary

apothecary stand on one side of your chair, shaking a phial that contained an emetic, and your servant on the other, with a glass of water, and a basin of camomile tea; while the great advocate of pleasure, wholly inattentive to our approach, was every now and then expressing the ravishing nature of his enjoyments in such pleasing ejaculations as these: "Oh my head, my head! d——n that wine, I will never taste another drop of it! I wish from my soul I had come away sooner! How could I be such a fool!" And when we attempted to seize the favourable opportunity to moralize a little, you could hardly give a rational answer; or even lift up your head to bid us a good morning, when we left you to settle your accounts in private, and enjoy your evening's debauch; for no man in his senses would presume to call it pleasure.

HORATIO.

But that, my friend, was only once in a way; it does not always happen so. You, who are a man of so much candour, will not surely condemn a thing for one flaw that may sometimes be found in it.

EUGENIO.

Ah, that is a poor come off, Horatio! indeed it will not do. It is as light as air. To use your own language,

language, "I must not suffer fine words without
"proof to have any weight in our impartial
"scale." I know, by fatal experience, what these
morning reckonings are; and though they may not
always call for the apothecary's aid, yet I know, and
you know too, that all these midnight revels and ca-
roufings are invariably, more or less, attended with
very disagreeable sensations in the morning; while
the pleasures I have described (if your friend's ve-
racity can be depended on) have quite a contrary
effect; and are never brought to recollection with-
out a fresh addition of real satisfactory delight. I
must therefore beg leave to make another notch in
favour of a religious life.

HORATIO.

Well, since you will have the laurel round your
own brow, Eugenio, may not your friend take one
little branch, and say some of his pleasures at least
are equal to yours?

EUGENIO.

No, not the smallest sprig, leaf, or bud, will I
ever suffer to be plucked from it, while this precious
truth stands upon sacred record: "Godliness is pro-
"fitable unto all things, having promise of the life
"that now is, and of that which is to come."

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

What, not grant me one advantage? Why surely, Eugenio, you are more obstinate than ever.

EUGENIO.

If I bring facts, and sound argument, to prove what I assert, and you refuse to assent to truth; I fancy you will be found to be the obstinate man, not I.

HORATIO.

Well then, obstinacy apart; pray, is there no pleasure to be found in the playhouse? in the ball-room? or at the billiard-table? You never go to any of these.

EUGENIO.

I go as often as I please.

HORATIO.

I never remember seeing you at any of these since I have had the pleasure of knowing you.

EUGENIO.

EUGENIO.

No, I believe not, and I hope never will, while I can enjoy delights of so superior a nature elsewhere?

HORATIO.

Pray, what pleasure can surpass that of seeing a good tragedy well acted? Does it not for a time melt the soul, and enrich it with every noble and generous sentiment; leaving a pleasing sensation behind, which is better felt than expressed?

EUGENIO.

Are you sure this is always the case? If I may judge from what I have felt myself, the indecent gestures, amorous looks, and double-entendres, of the actresses during the farce, have totally effaced all these fine sentiments you describe, and produced others of a very different tendency in their room. But, supposing this was not the case, are you sure you really felt these elevating and generous sentiments you talk of?

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

Do you then doubt my veracity, Eugenio? Or do you think I am so far gone in wickedness, as to be past all sense of feeling; and totally incapable of knowing when my soul receives any tender impressions?

EUGENIO.

By no means, Horatio. I have my reasons for asking this question: but first I will tell you, why real christians never go to balls, plays, or assemblies (I say real Christians, for I have nothing to do with only professing ones). It is because they can not find one thing there suited to their more refined taste; or that can afford them the smallest degree of solid satisfaction. Having been accustomed to partake of joys that spring from a much purer source, they can have no manner of relish for those you so highly prize. Nay, if they are at any time so foolish as to attempt even to taste of them in the smallest degree, they find it instant death to their spiritual enjoyments. Just as if you were to take out one of the fish sporting in the adjacent river, and set it to feed among the cows in the meadow below us; it could not partake of the food they do, not being suited to its nature; but, after a few gasps for its own element, would soon expire.

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

By this comparison you seem to insinuate, that you are altogether of a different nature from the rest of the world, and live in a different element?

EUGENIO.

If the word of God be true, and if I have been savingly converted by grace, I certainly differ in these respects from thousands in the world, who, like you, are slaves to sin: consequently my pleasures being of a spiritual and heavenly kind, flowing from the gracious operations of the Spirit of God, must far exceed yours, which are only of a sensual nature; or, at best, the product of fancy, or the offspring of a fruitful imagination, warmed at the representation of a play, mostly if not wholly built upon fable.

HORATIO.

Really, Eugenio, you have already got so far above my reach, that unless you come down a little, within the compass of your friend's capacity, I shall have but a very shallow notion of these spiritual and heavenly joys you talk of. Pray whereabouts do you find them?

EUGENIO.

To tell you the plain truth, Horatio, I am greatly at a loss how to act with you here. I could wish

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from my heart to be able to give you a just idea of the Christian's religious joys; but the scriptures of unerring truth inform me "that they are spiritually "discerned," hidden from the carnal mind, and caution me not to cast these precious pearls before swine, lest, being ignorant of their value, they should trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend me: and though I have no dread of such harsh treatment from my friend, yet I know the word of God is true, and that all my attempts to make you rightly comprehend the joys of the gospel will certainly be in vain, unless they are accompanied with a divine power, far superior to any thing that fallen nature is possessed of: but notwithstanding this, if you can but banish all prejudice from your mind, exercise your rational powers, and seriously reflect on the divine origin of these joys, their pure and holy nature, and happy effects on the believer's conduct joined to the united testimony of a thousand credible and living witnesses; I'm well persuaded, though you may not comprehend them, you cannot but see something of *unknown, unfelt* preciousness in them, sufficient to convince you they must far outweigh any thing you can put in the scale against them. Christians who have something more than a name, who truly and savingly believe the important truths of the gospel, find them productive of the most substantial realities; need no historic proofs to convince them of their divine authority, but from frequent and happy experience can set to their

their seal that God is true. With a holy confidence they look up to him for an accomplishment of the gracious promises he hath been pleased to make in his word, seek for it in the ordinances of his own appointing, and are not disappointed; for in these means of grace, the usual channels through which he conveys his blessing, they get such clear and comprehensive views of the mystery of redeeming love; of the glory, harmony, and stability of the divine perfections, eternally united to accomplish the glorious plan of salvation; its freeness, fulness, permanency, and suitability to their own wretched case, as sweetly and powerfully constrain their willing hearts to embrace it as completely finished for them. Faith then in exercise, with penetrating eye, explores the heights and depths, the lengths, and breadths of the love of God in Christ Jesus; views with divine astonishment the unsearchable riches of Christ, and in holy triumph calls them all her own; while the enraptured soul, overwhelmed with a feeling sense of her own nothingness, as wholly unworthy of such unmerited favour, labours under a pleasing weight of gratitude, which she can never fully express; and sometimes is so sweetly circumfused with the extatic manifestations of divine love, as even to forget for a time her dull companion the body, to which she is so very closely connected, anxiously longing and panting for the full expansion of all her powers; that she may enjoy, without interruption, the eternal fulness of that

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unutterable

unutterable bliss, of which she has now such ravishing foretastes.

HORATIO.

But pray, my good sir, does not all this smell very strong indeed of rank enthusiasm?

EUGENIO.

Does Horatio then doubt his friend's veracity? Does he think him so very far gone in religious melancholy, as to be past all sense of feeling? totally incapable of knowing when his soul is happy or miserable? Or has he quite forgot the answer given him to questions of a similar nature, which he put to his friend a few minutes ago? Pray, did I then deny you the faculty of perception? Or refuse you the power of knowing when you enjoyed mental delight?

HORATIO.

No;—but—

EUGENIO.

No—buts will not do, Horatio; I must have something more substantial; good sound argument to convince

convince me, that you are possessed of a peculiar power of the mind, which I and thousands besides are deprived of.

HORATIO.

I by no means refuse you this power, Eugenio; therefore, having no room to call the truth of your testimony in question, must necessarily believe you really enjoy the pleasing sensations you talk of with so much rapture: but still I cannot help thinking they are of an enthusiastic kind, and that you rather mistake the source they come from.

EUGENIO.

Suppose I do make this mistake, and that by your superior wisdom you really are a better judge of the nature of my joys than I am myself; which, by the by, is not very likely; still you have granted enough to enable me to shout victory, in allowing the reality of the Christian's joys: for if they are real, they must of necessity, from the nature of the objects, and things they have to do with, in every respect far surpass yours. But I should think myself wanting to the cause of truth and the gospel, if I did not attempt to convince my friend, that the pious mind is not more certain of the reality of his reli-

gious comforts, than of the purity of the source from whence they spring; for 'tis this sweet ingredient that swells the cup of joy, and gives it a heavenly relish, every time he is permitted to taste it. Of this he is fully assured from the infallible testimony of God himself, who has promised in his sacred word, over and over again, to communicate these spiritual blessings to his redeemed people in every age through the agency of his Holy Spirit. He is there commanded to ask, and he shall receive, that his joy may be full; that this joy a stranger intermeddleth not with, and no man taketh it from him. He knows, from heart-felt experience, the truth of what Peter said of the converted Gentiles in Asia, "Believing ye rejoice, with joy unspeakable" and full of glory." He knows it also from the constant and united testimony of all the scripture worthies, from the dying lips of saints and martyrs, in all ages, and from the well-attested experience of a thousand living witnesses; who with one general voice assert, that in these spiritual enjoyments, there is a *nescio quid divini*, attended with such unutterable sweetness, so far surpassing all that a blind deluded world calls pleasure, as leaves them no manner of room to doubt of the divine source from whence they flow. If my friend be bold enough to deny it, he must deny the authenticity of the scriptures; he must look upon the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, saints, and martyrs of old, to be a company of cheats and liars; and some thousands of gracious,
wise,

wife, and learned men, now on this island, to be no better. Nay, in some measure, he must even deny the testimony of his own senses; for the happy effects of these divine and heavenly sensations in the real Christian, who enjoys them, may be clearly seen by all around him, and demonstrate as much as any thing their divine original; for they invariably lead the soul to the love of God, his word, his ways, his people, and his cause; to the love and practice of holiness; to a hatred and forsaking of sin; to a contempt of this world, humility of mind, victory over the fear of death, and a daily longing to be with Christ in glory. Hear the language of one, lately gone there, who enjoyed many precious foretastes of it on earth. "I never so feelingly," says he, "wonder at my own depravity, nor so deeply abhor myself, as when the fire of divine love warms my heart. Surely the knowledge of salvation is the most powerful incentive to repentance; and not only the most prevailing, but an absolutely irresistible motive to universal holiness. Surely, O God, I could not thus long after thy presence, if I did not know the sweetness of it! And I could not know that but by the revelation of thy Spirit in my heart; nor love thee at all, if thou hadst not first loved me."

HORATIO.

To hear you talk, Eugenio, one might be led to think that Christians are as happy as angels; but

I'm sure there is very little of it to be seen in their countenances.

EUGENIO.

You did not hear me say, they were always in this rejoicing frame: if they were, they would not be fit to have any social intercourse with their fellow creatures; but it is their solid and constant happiness to know that the foundation of their joy cannot be shaken, nor the source of it dried up: and their rich privilege, at times, to be highly favoured with gracious manifestations of divine love, as much superior to all the empty, frothy pleasures of the fashionable worldling, as the heavens are higher than the earth. But to put you right with respect to judging from appearances, you must know, the real believer makes no parade nor boasting of these favours; he is absolutely forbid, as I told you, to cast them before swine; therefore he enjoys them in secret, or communicates them only to those, who from experience know their worth as well as himself; and often, perhaps, you may think him melancholy, when his mind is most delightfully engaged in the sweetest contemplation of divine things; but your erroneous judgment can by no means lessen the reality of his joy: indeed the effects of the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, may sometimes be seen in his countenance, and read in his

his language; but it will lead him neither to extravagant mirth, nor levity of spirit; for in him is truly verified the poet's sentiment, "Too happy to be sportive, he's serene." Besides, Horatio, I'm greatly afraid you judge of the state of real Christians by those who are only nominally such; who, perhaps, make a blazing profession, but are as totally ignorant of the nature, privileges, and blessings of the gospel, as the savage Indian in the wilds of America. Now, what I am going to say of these, may perhaps surprise you. From my heart I believe they are by no means so happy as you are, and cannot, from the state they are in, enjoy half so much pleasure as you do.

HORATIO.

Well! this is an unexpected concession indeed. A little while ago you seemed resolutely determined, at all events, to prevent your friend's plucking a single leaf or bud from your laurelled brow; but now, of your own accord, you present him with a large branch.

EUGENIO.

Not I indeed; and glory to sovereign grace, never can I be persuaded, contrary to the clearest evidence, that

that ever there existed a carnal man on earth, who enjoyed (while such) one single, real advantage above a child of God. But you run into the grossest mistakes, Horatio, for want of making proper distinctions. I never once attempted to undertake the defence of the numerous tribes of almost Christians, who, like mushrooms, spring up in every church, sect, and party, in this highly favoured island. All these striving to get to heaven in a way of their own making, are too proud to submit to God's way of free and distinguishing grace. Some think to arrive there by virtue of their own merit; some join to this, what Christ has done for them; others rest only on a bare superficial knowledge of scripture truths, without a divine and experimental application of them to the heart; all striving in vain to serve both God and Mammon; which, never being able to effect, they continue, as I hinted before, to be of all men the most miserable: for what with the gnawings of a clamorous conscience, which they can never pacify; the perplexing cares and troubles of life, which they have no true patience to bear with; the tormenting fear of death, which, like an evil spirit, haunts them continually; they neither enjoy the substantial delights of true religion, nor, without remorse, partake of the silly amusements of a giddy, unthinking world. But it is not so with the happy saint, the peculiar favourite of heaven; who has but one object in view, to which he is wholly devoted, and from which he draws a constant supply of pure,
heart-

heart-felt delight: he is quite of a different mould, and no more resembles the motly group of "almost Christians," (some of whom you may be acquainted with) than light resembles darkness.

HORATIO.

I must give you credit, Eugenio, for your warm zeal in defence of a people, whose cause you seem pretty well versed in; but I think, by this time, you must have nearly exhausted your subject.

EUGENIO.

I rather fancy my friend wishes to make good the old proverb, "measure my corn by his own bushel;" for I have not heard you advance a single argument in favour of your own cause for some time. But if this be really the case with you, it is by no means so with me: so far from having exhausted the copious subject (as you think), I have but just entered upon it by way of introduction, and am only afraid the present occasion will not afford me sufficient time to communicate half of what I have got to say in its favour. I must therefore be obliged to confine myself to a few only of the privileges, blessings, and advantages the true believer enjoys over the man of the world; to some of which, I am very confident,

confident, you never paid any attention, have no just conception of them, and will not be a little surpris'd when you hear something more about them.

HORATIO.

I hate to conceal the truth, even when it goes against me; I must therefore frankly acknowledge, like a wise general, who perceives he is likely to lose the day, I was going to propose a cessation of hostilities: but this last challenge has so far excited my curiosity, as to determine me to keep my ground; to stand upon the defensive a little longer, and hear what you have more to say. Perhaps I may find a favourable opening, to make an advantageous sally on some of your outworks; and if I do, depend upon it, I'll have no manner of pity, for you have had none for me; therefore take care of yourself and mind what you advance.

EUGENIO.

Truth is never afraid, let who will threaten. My intrenchments are immoveably fixed on this impregnable rock; and for these eighteen years past, that I have been called by grace to defend them, all the malice, policy, power, and rage, of earth and hell, have not yet been able to make the smallest breach in them.

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

That's bad encouragement for me; however, let's hear something more about these peculiar blessings and advantages, which it seems you strange kind of people enjoy above all others.

EUGENIO.

I'll begin with one that will probably make you stare, and very likely may meet with a flat denial; but our mercy is, that bold denials and contradictory assertions, from those who never felt the power of saving grace in their hearts, can in no respect whatever lessen the truth of plain matters of fact; and this is one, attested from the happy experience of a thousand living witnesses, "That the true believer, when in his right mind, living only by faith, as he always should do, has every thing his own way."

HORATIO.

I'm sure that's more than I can say;—for matters go frequently the very contrary way with me from what I could wish, and very often give me no small concern.

EUGENIO.

But it is not so with the real Christian. I affirm again, when in his right mind, he has every thing he wishes for others; every thing he likes for himself; and every thing his own way.

HORATIO.

Pray how do you make that out? Is he not subject to all the cares, troubles, and disappointments of life as well as others?

EUGENIO.

Yes. But he knows who sends them, whence they first sprung; what valuable ends, by the converting power of infinite wisdom, they are made to answer. To him they are changed from curses to blessings; all invariably work together for his good, and can never give him pain, as they do the wicked: but the believer's peculiar mercy lies in this, that having his will effectually subdued by the irresistible power of sovereign grace, it is, from that happy period, sweetly mingled with the will of God; and they become one. Agreeably to this precious scripture-truth, they dwell in God, and God in them. They are one with him, and he with them. Whatever
God

God wills, they will. And if God must necessarily have every thing his own way, so has the Christian. Whatever befalls him, whether of a prosperous or an adverse kind, of a painful or pleasing nature, his constant language is, " 'Tis the Lord, let him do " what seemeth him good ;" knowing it is the wise and gracious allotment of his heavenly father, which he not only hopes may, but is confidently assured shall, most certainly terminate in his present and eternal welfare. Therefore he never dares to call in question, any of his awful and sovereign degrees; nor presumes to cavil at any of his mysterious revealed truths; nor wishes to alter one single dispensation of his providence towards him; but sweetly sings with the poet,

My will conform'd to thy celestial voice,
Knows no restraint; for duty is her choice.
What ills thou send'st, I thankfully approve,
As kind corrections, pledges of thy love:
In every change, whatever stage I run,
My daily wish succeeds; Thy Will be done.

Did you never hear the old story of the pious countryman? When the 'squire asked him what weather it would be to-morrow? " Just what I please," replied he. " What you please!" said the 'squire: " What do you mean by that?" Yes, sir, just what " I please; for I'm very sure, it will be just what " pleases God; and I'm as sure that will please " me." Just so is it with the real experienced Christian, who lives near his God, and enjoys much communion

communion with him: whatever paths through life he is called to tread in, he is always sure to have his own will, because it is wholly submitted to, and sweetly coincides with the eternal mind of God, who worketh and ordereth all things according to the counsel of his own will. If the turning of a straw would totally reverse the most disastrous event that ever befel him, he would not do it; because it would imply a distrust of that infinite wisdom, power and goodness in which he has the most unbounded confidence. To this happy state of resignation, an illustrious character in France, viz. Archbishop Fénélon, arrived, when he saw his favourite prince a breathless corpse before him.

HORATIO.

All this is very fine, Eugenio; and if there really do exist such accomplished Christians, they certainly are above the common level, and must necessarily be more happy than others; but I rather fancy my friend, in the warmth of his religious zeal, has over-shot the mark; and drawn a picture of what the believer should be, and not of what he really is.

EUGENIO.

You cannot say, I have made the smallest attempt to represent the Christian as a perfect being. He is
too

too well acquainted with his own heart to harbour the thought for a moment. Neither do I say he is thus completely, constantly, and invariably resigned to the will of God, in all things. But thus much I will boldly affirm, and from happy experience know it to be a truth, that all Christians, more or less, have given up their wills to God, and in proportion as they are enabled by grace to do this, the more or less happy they are: and that there are now existing many thousands of gracious men and women, who, from long experience of their own folly and weakness, dread nothing so much as being left to themselves, or having their wills separated from the will of God; and, therefore, most gladly acquiesce in every dispensation of his providence towards them: enjoying from this divine resignation (peculiar only to themselves) a sweet contentment of mind, which a carnal world has no conception of; a heavenly composure of soul, which all the philosophy of Greece and Rome could never have afforded them.

HORATIO.

If these things are really so, I must be forced to say with Agrippa to Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

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EUGENIO.

EUGENIO.

Almost will not do; better remain as you are. An almost Christian, I told you before, knows nothing at all of these things; and is one of the most uncomfortable beings that breathes. Rather take the first opportunity you can of retiring in secret, to implore of God his holy spirit, to convince you of your depraved and miserable state as a fallen creature; and to give you the knowledge of those things that will make for your eternal peace. They are promised and freely given to beggars, but never procured by human merit.

HORATIO.

Some day or other I may perhaps do this; in the mean time you may produce something more out of your Christian repository, which you just now represented as being so full.

EUGENIO.

Do you think, Horatio, it is possible for any material good, however great or excellent, to satisfy an immaterial mind?

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

Not completely so; there being no analogy between them.

EUGENIO.

Then I fairly conclude, the real Christian has not only the advantage over the unconverted man in all his enjoyments, but is, in fact, the only satisfied person upon the earth. For he alone has God for his portion; and nothing short of this can ever fully satisfy the unbounded desires of an immortal being. You gentlemen of pleasure, as you falsely call yourselves, with all the imaginary delights and vain amusements you can possibly invent, can never bring your capacious minds to be permanently satisfied with such empty baubles as these. You know as well as I, there is always a craving void left, an expected something wanting that causes pain, which you cannot rightly account for. But it is not so with the happy believer, who enjoys much secret communion with his God; who finds in the immense ocean of his infinite fulness all that his enlarged mind can possibly wish or conceive. He feels no aching void, no painful disappointment of expected good, while walking in the light of a Saviour's reconciled countenance; but sometimes gets so near

that blessed presence, in which saints and angels find a heaven, as to be constrained, from the overflowings of a happy heart, to cry out, "'Tis enough."

HORATIO.

Having granted the principle on which you build this advantage, I cannot with propriety make any objection to it; therefore you may, if you please, proceed to another: only be so kind as to keep a little lower, and leave saints and angels to their own joys.

EUGENIO.

You remember, when we first began, I attempted to prove that the real Christian not only enjoyed the common blessings of life in a higher degree than the man of the world; but that, in fact, he was the only person who had a proper relish for them: but I did not mention all the arguments I had to prove this advantage. Will you now give me leave to bring some of them forward?

HORATIO.

By all means, Eugenio; for then I shall, perhaps, understand you a little better, and be better able to defend myself; for of late you have taken such high flights in spiritual things, and travelled in such an intricate

tricate path of religious mysteries, as (to speak freely) I have not been rightly able always to comprehend you.

EUGENIO.

I verily believe it, Horatio : it is natural to suppose we can understand but little of that, concerning which we have but little knowledge, and of which we have had no experience ; especially in spiritual things. But we will now descend to plain matters of fact, with which you are more familiarly acquainted ; and you, if you please, shall sit in the judgment seat, and decide for the Christian.

About two years ago, when that fine estate in Devonshire unexpectedly fell to your lot, by the death of a distant relation, can you recollect the temper and disposition of mind, with which you travelled two hundred miles to take possession of it ? And how you relished the entertainment on the road ?

HORATIO.

Extremely well. I was too happy to be displeased with any body ; and too intent upon what I had in view, to find fault with any thing : on the contrary, nature seemed to wear a more beautiful hue than ever ; every thing was pleasing ; and every thing I

enjoyed, seemed more palatable than ever I had experienced before. I well remember a circumstance of drinking some claret at an inn in Salisbury, which I then thought the best I had ever drunk in my life: but last summer, having occasion to stop there, I called for another bottle at the same inn, and had a warm dispute with the landlord about it; for he would insist upon its being the same wine, and I as positively insisted it was not; or else it was greatly altered for the worse. But he had the impudence to tell me my taste was altered, and not the flavour of his claret.

EUGENIO.

I dare say, the landlord judged right. You were not then going to inherit an estate; two years possession had spoiled your palate, and deprived the wine of its flavour.

Now, Horatio, just as you felt on that three days journey to Devonshire, so does the real experienced Christian, while travelling through the dreary path of life. He has got an estate of immense value left him by the death of an elder brother, and he is hastening upwards, as fast as the wings of time can carry him, to take possession of it. His chief attention is engrossed by it; his best affections placed upon it; and sometimes, by the eye of faith, he gets such a near and ravishing view of its inconceivable beauty,
incorruptible

incorruptible nature, and eternal duration, as makes his heart leap for joy; and sweetly leads it to such a happy and resigned state, as makes him content with every thing he meets with here below. He is displeased with nobody; nothing comes amiss; all is pleasing and delightful around him. If disasters happen, he knows in what light to view them; they sit easy. He can even take the spoiling of his earthly goods joyfully: being only a traveller, such little temporary inconveniences as these on the road no way affect his real inheritance; and that's all he principally cares for. As the near and certain hope of possession, in your case, gave an additional flavour to the claret you drank at Salisbury; so, with him, it gives a double relish to every earthly comfort he enjoys. But here, Horatio, lies his very great advantage; your happy disposition of mind lasted but three days; his commences from the moment he becomes a converted man, and continues, more or less, to his latest breath. He likewise may enjoy, in common with you and others, the pleasures arising from the near prospect of possessing any earthly good; but neither you, nor any man, in a carnal state, loving and living in sin, can ever have a taste of the more exalted and refined pleasures, flowing from the Christian's well grounded hope, of shortly coming to the possession of an eternal state of uninterrupted joy and felicity.

HORATIO.

But this happy, resigned state of mind can flow only from the degree of certainty we have of coming to the possession of an expected good. Now I was sure of enjoying my estate; but can you say, the Christian is as sure of enjoying his?

EUGENIO.

Yes; ten times more so. A number of unforeseen fatal events, incident to human life, might have for ever prevented your taking possession of an earthly estate: besides, a flaw in the will, a defect in the title deeds, with many other things I could mention, may yet deprive you of it: and at farthest, there can be nothing more certain, than that in a very little time, a much dreaded messenger, from a supreme court, will be commissioned to take these deeds of settlement out of your hands, however reluctant to part with them, and consign them to another; who, perhaps, may not hold them half the time you have. But who dares say, or where is the man that can prove, that any of these things, in the smallest degree, can ever effect the Christian's permanent inheritance? It is eternal, incorruptible, and undefiled; founded upon, kept and secured for him by, all the immutable perfections of deity. Neither time nor accident,

accident, nor life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, can possibly injure or destroy it. Be assured, Horatio, the unhappy man, who dares attempt to shake the foundation of the christian's hope, aims at what is shocking to suppose, the annihilation of the divine attributes; consequently, the very being of God himself. People who allow even the shadow of uncertainty in any of God's works, particularly in that grand display of his love, the eternal salvation of his elect, reduce him to a state of littleness, which even reason and common sense shudder at. It is the most gross affront a poor, puny, finite creature can put upon the wisdom, power, and goodness of the divine Majesty; and to assert and maintain it, the very height of blasphemy.

HORATIO.

Pray, shall I be mistaken in saying, my friend has got too warm in defending his cause?

EUGENIO.

I fancy, if any body were to call in question the security of your property, you would be warm too.

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

Nay, I fancy my friend attempted something like it just now.

EUGENIO.

I only advanced (by way of argument) universally allowed truths; and stated some possible matters of fact, which, Horatio himself will allow, might have happened. But all the sophistry of wicked men, or all the malice of hell, can never advance one good argument to prove, that an heir of God, and a joint heir with Jesus Christ, shall ever be deprived of his eternal inheritance. He has already got the writing in his own hands, and the earnest of it in his heart; death, with all his power, shall rob him of neither. But so sure as a God of faithfulness and truth has promised, so sure shall he, at the appointed hour, come to the actual possession of it.

I will, indeed, very readily agree with my friend, that the pleasure, flowing from the hope of expected good, must, in a great measure, depend on the degree of certainty we have of enjoying that good; consequently, the Christian's happiness must necessarily depend upon his faith. As the one increases, or decreases,

greases, so must the other. There's no joy nor peace but in believing. If that precious grace, the sole gift of God, be at a low ebb, something like a grain of mustard-seed, his peace must be so too: but in this case, he has a very strong anchor, near akin to faith, which never fails him; this he casts within the vail, and securely rides out the most dreadful storms: till his faith, gathering strength, rises high, feels the celestial gale, up anchor, and away he goes through an immense ocean of what may be truly called pleasure; enjoying, in his course, the clear evidence of things not yet seen, and the very substance of things he daily hopes for. Joy now rises, at times, even to ecstasy, and enables him to sing with the royal prophet, "Whom have I in heaven, but thee, O God, and there is none on earth I desire besides thee." And if he sometimes meets with bad weather on his passage, it does not make him change his note; with a little variation only, he strikes up with another saint, and says, "Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines; the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat; the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stalls: yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." Believe me, Horatio, however an ignorant and gainsaying world may scoff, sneer, and ridicule at the Christian's life of faith; one hour of his enjoyment, in
such

such a frame as this, far out-weighs, in real value, a whole life of what you modern gentlemen falsely call pleasant.

HORATIO.

That may be so; but you'll find it a difficult matter to make us believe it: besides, you certainly carry things too far, and are not satisfied with obtaining, upon the whole, a bare advantage; but must needs estimate your enjoyments at a rate, far beyond what other people have any conception of.

EUGENIO.

If you and they had the same spiritual perception of divine things that the real Christian has, I'm sure you would not say so: and if I did not myself know, from happy experience, the truth of what I have advanced, believe me, Horatio, I should not have taken half so much pains to convince you of it.

HORATIO.

I cannot but thank my friend for his good intentions; how far they may answer his expectations, is not for me to determine: however, if you please,
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we'll just have one or two more of the Christian's peculiar advantages, and then close the subject.

EUGENIO.

I fancy the force of truth begins to have some little effect on my friend's mind; therefore, not to tire his patience, I'll readily comply with his request, and only mention three more, out of a multitude of these distinguished privileges, to which none but the true believer has any right; and which, in fact, none but he can or does enjoy. I suppose you will have no objection to adopt the sentiment of one of old, "that man is born to trouble, as the sparks fly upward." Good and bad have their portion of this allotted them; no wisdom, power, nor policy, in human nature can devise or effect means to avoid it: all must suffer. The grand question, therefore, necessarily follows; Who is best supported in the suffering state? Who can wade through it with the least pain? Or, to speak in very plain language, who can make the most of this bad bargain? Did you ever give afflictions a hearty welcome? rejoice in them as special blessings? or sincerely thank God for them? Did you ever say with St. Paul, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distress, for Christ's sake?"

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

No; I never pretended to such a stoick-like disposition; nor can I believe there is a Christian in the kingdom who ever did this; unless you will first allow, they could divest themselves of all sense and feeling.

EUGENIO.

Indeed, my friend, you are very greatly mistaken; the word of God, both by precept and example; positively affirms what you seem so unwilling to believe: and the happy experience of thousands of pious Christians now living corroborate this fact, that the true believer, in the exercise of faith, having only an imperfect view of the path through which the Lord is leading him, sees a *needs be* for the trial of this faith; and can, in such a state, rejoice in tribulation, count it all joy when he is led through divers trials; and say from the heart, it was good for him to be afflicted. For all this, he is no more of the stoick, than you are; neither am I attempting to amuse you with an ideal character, or describing a saint, that has got above the reach of sense and feelings; but the real state of those who know, with other fallen creatures, that no affliction for the present is joyous, but grievous; yet essentially differ from thousands around them, by a practical faith in
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the divine record, that all these afflictions work for them a far more exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory. And this blessed consideration not only makes their troubles light, and easy to be born; but frequently enables them to rejoice in them as a real good; the special gift of their heavenly Father. Peter and John did so, when they were counted worthy to suffer shame for a Saviour's sake. Lacerated backs and fettered feet did not hinder Paul and Silas from expressing the joyful effusion of their hearts in songs of praise to God. The primitive Christians did not murmur, fret, and repine, at human calamities, as the carnal mind does; but even took the spoiling of their goods joyfully. And thousands in this gospel day, (your friend, I trust, through grace, among the rest) can with pleasure adopt the language of a favourite author of yours, and say,

“ Amid my list of blessings infinite,

“ Stand this the foremost, ‘ That my heart has bled.’ ”

Fire and faggots have often kindled such a flame of holy rapture in the breast of dying martyrs, as will continue to blaze, with renewed fervency, throughout the countless ages of eternity. But this is a peculiar blessing, which I well know the men of the world are totally ignorant of. The afflictive dispensations of providence will never be looked upon by them as a real good: they cannot comprehend how such a thing can be. It is the distinguishing characteristic

characteristic of the real Christian alone, to rejoice in the worst things on earth, and the best in heaven. No hypocrite, however refined, could ever arrive at this.

HORATIO.

I have not, I frankly confess, and never yet could look upon misfortunes, troubles, and afflictions, in any other light than as real evils, and marks of the divine displeasure. If you super-refined Christians have attained the heavenly art of changing them into blessings, and can really receive them as marks of God's peculiar regard, you certainly have a very great advantage over the bulk of your fellow creatures. But may not we worldlings have our scruples about this matter? Are you very sure these things are really so?

EUGENIO.

Did you never read your Bible, Horatio? or have you forgot what that says? "Whom the Lord loves he chastens, and scourgeth every son whom he receives."

HORATIO.

I must indeed allow this text, with many others, is greatly in your favour; and perhaps it will be best for

for me not to dispute the matter: therefore, if you please, let's proceed to your next subject.

EUGENIO.

That you will find a still greater blessing than the former, peculiar only to the heaven-born soul, and it consists in this; that he knows he has a covenant God and Father, to whom he may, and constantly does, approach with holy boldness in every time of need. To this impregnable rock David, in the hour of his greatest danger and distress, fled for refuge, and was safe. Here Luther could have whatever he asked, because he asked in faith, agreeable to the will of God. Here, on his knees, an honest countryman of mine was more dreaded by a proud queen, than an army of twenty thousand men. Here the saints, in all ages, have performed wonders; stopped the bottles of heaven, and opened them again; subdued kingdoms; conquered armies; overturned the counsels of the wicked; averted national judgments, and procured national blessings: and here, in the present day, thousands of happy souls find inexpressible delight, in spreading all their various complaints, cares, and concerns, before a faithful, promise-fulfilling God; confidently assured, that what they commit to his charge, will be wisely managed for their best interest. What they cannot disclose to their dearest friend on earth they can

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freely unbosom to their heavenly Father. A pleasure this, of which you men of the world are never permitted to taste: neither did you ever find an earthly benefactor, however generous, able, and willing to help you, that could help like the Christian's God.

H O R A T I O.

It is now some years, Eugenio, (I must acknowledge to my shame), since the Bible and I have dropped acquaintance; therefore I may be mistaken in what I am going to say: but I think, I have read somewhere in it, that Paul once asked the Lord, three times, for something or other he wanted; and was refused after all. Pray how does this agree with what you advance?

E U G E N I O.

Perfectly well. And also affords an additional advantage to the Christian: in that being an imperfect creature, in a very imperfect state, he may sometimes ask, and certainly does ask, what would prove very hurtful to him; therefore, it is his unspeakable mercy, that the Lord wisely and graciously withholds every thing of this kind, and only confers what he knows will tend to his real good. My little boy begged very hard, the other day,

day, for a rotten apple I had filled with poison, and was going to place in a hole, through which the rats passed. Do you think I should have been his friend, had I granted his request? I believe not. No more would God be a friend to his own children, were he always to give them what they asked. He loves them too well for that: but never withholds any one good thing, that in the smallest degree will contribute either to their present or future welfare. Having already bestowed on them the greatest of all his favours, the unspeakable gift of his well beloved Son; they find in the sweet exercise of prayer, that all other blessings are included in, connected with, and flow wholly from it. But you know as well as I, that this friendly intercourse with heaven, at a throne of grace, and consequently the pleasure and advantages arising from it, is altogether an impenetrable secret to those, who are daily pursuing a mere phantom of happiness in the idle amusements of what is styled fashionable life. Such persons can have no more idea of what passes between the saint and his God here, than they can have of what passes between them in heaven: consequently they must be wholly unacquainted with the prime part of human felicity. For God only is the source and fountain of happiness; and the nearer a rational being approaches to him in nature and communion, the happier he must be. But your votaries to sensual pleasure run directly from this blessed source, are ignorant of its value, never resort to it, and, what

is worse, have no desire to know any thing at all about it. Is not this a true picture of your own state, Horatio? Do you rightly understand what I am talking about? Do you ever pray?

HORATIO.

Ask no questions, and you'll not oblige your friend to expose his own weakness. Be content with the many advantages already granted you; and proceed to exhibit the third and last you proposed to mention, in favour of the Christian cause. That, I suppose, will be the crowning one of all.

EUGENIO.

Whatever you may think of it now, one thing I am sure of, in a very little time, you will find it one of the most important and necessary blessings that a fallen creature can enjoy: and if not possessed of it then (which God forbid), you will be glad to give your fine Devonshire estate for it, and ten thousand worlds besides, if you had them.

HORATIO.

I suppose you allude to the hour of death. But pray, don't you Christians, of a superior kind, die as well

well as other people? If you could but convince me they do not, I'll commence one directly.

EUGENIO.

I believe the love of life would make you do a great many things, Horatio. But Christians cannot make themselves, as many people pretend. If the Bible be true, they are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained we should walk in them. But with respect to the power of death over the human race, we all know full well how far it extends; good and bad, young and old, noble and ignoble, must bow to his sceptre: he is no respecter of persons. All have sinned in their federal head, and all must suffer the penalty incurred, by passing through this dread valley to a future state. The grand question, therefore, between you and me must be this;—Who can encounter this King of Terrors, and not be afraid? Who can long for, rather than dread, his approach? converse familiarly with him as a friend? Give him a hearty welcome as such? And never treat him as an enemy? Say, is it the believer? Or is it the man of the world? Come, Horatio, let us finally decide the matter. Muster up all your forces, make a vigorous stand, and try if you can answer this question in your favour. I frankly declare, and most solemnly protest, if you can clearly prove, to your friend's satisfaction,

that the man who swims down the stream of what you call fashionable pleasure, fares best when he comes to grapple with the grisly monarch on a death bed; then I'll freely give up the contest; pluck the crown of victory from the Christian's laurelled brow, where hitherto it has justly been placed; and you and your merry companions shall wear it. The religion, that will not bear a man out to the very last gasp, is not worth keeping.

HORATIO.

You must not expect, my good sir, to receive any compliment from me for this seemingly generous offer; being well persuaded you are very confident of the Christian's superiority in the matter, or you would not have made it.

EUGENIO.

So far you have judged right. For indeed, Horatio, there are so many plain, undeniable facts, to prove the Christian's claim to this privilege, that the man must be impudence itself who would dare to deny it.

HORATIO.

HORATIO.

Then pray let us have a true and accurate description of it; for I'm now come to the resolution no longer to contest the matter with you.

EUGENIO.

A circumstance, to which you and I were once witnesses, just now occurs to my mind, which may greatly help to illustrate the true believer's peculiar and happy advantage over the man of the world, in the hour of death. You may remember in the beginning of the year 1780, when we lodged together at Madras; one day after dinner, a Gentoo conjurer came in, and after amusing us with a number of his curious tricks, he carelessly opened a round box he held under his arm, and out darted a large rattlesnake, twined about his neck, and kept hissing and rattling in such a frightful manner, as you know, alarmed us not a little: especially when its sparkling eye was fixed our way, as if ready to spring upon some of us.

HORATIO.

I remember it very well, and how the fellow smiled to see the confusion and consternation we were all in;

every one crying out, "Put it up, put it up! Seize it, seize it!"

EUGENIO.

Pray what do you think made him smile, and act with so much self-composure, while we were all so terribly frightened?

HORATIO.

The reason is obvious. Because he was very confident there could be no danger, having himself extracted the venomous reptile's sting, and pulled out all his teeth: a circumstance we were totally ignorant of; consequently could not but dread the fatal effects of these poisonous weapons.

EUGENIO.

Now, Horatio, apply this fact to the real Christian and the man of pleasure, in their last moments, and you will clearly see who fares best then. Death has got a sting, and a dreadful one it is; enough to make the stoutest heart tremble. Millions of the human race will feel the tremendous effects of its venom, in the excruciating agonies of despair to all eternity. But the believer's unspeakable

able mercy and distinguishing privilege consist in his having a well grounded hope, and confident assurance, that this sting is taken away. Consequently when the monster comes to aim his unerring shaft at his heart, he dreads no more harm from it, than the Gentoo did from the hissing of the rattle-snake. He smiles at the foe, from a divine and heart-felt knowledge of what Christ hath done and suffered for him, when he robbed death of all his malignant power, and perfumed the noisome grave with his presence. Frail nature may indeed sometimes shudder at the monarch's ghastly appearance: it never yet was rightly reconciled to its own dissolution, by all the arguments that human reason could ever suggest. But true saving faith, which none but a child of God possesses, views death in a very different light; sees nothing ghastly in him; waits with a kind of holy anxiety for his nearer approach, as a kind deliverer come to set his soul at liberty; a faithful messenger dispatched from his heavenly Father's court, to throw open the gates of eternal life, that he may triumphantly enter in, and take possession of the glorious inheritance. Then the dying saint can address his happy spirit, and say,

“ My soul, the hour approaches fast,
When, through a Saviour's Grace,
Thou'lt safe arrive in heaven at last,
And see him face to face.

Grim death to thee now proves no more,
 With all his gloomy train,
 Than a rough gale to waft thee o'er,
 Where endless pleasures reign.

There on the bosom of thy God
 In ecstasy recline,
 And all that Jesus bought with blood
 Shall be for ever thine."

This is not fancy, Horatio; nor the delusion of an enthusiastic mind, nor an imaginary display merely of what the christian wishes to arrive at; but a fair and just state of facts, which thousands have experienced the truth of. Let the unprejudiced man, who has frequently seen the faint on his death-bed, deny it if he can. I, for one, will ever stand up, as an eye and ear witness to the truth of this fact: having beheld, with inexpressible delight, the believer in his last moments, triumphing over death as a conquered enemy; courting his approach, and crying out, as thousands have done before him, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." I have also seen with grief, and horror of mind, the hopeless sinner in the agonies of death, blaspheming his God, cursing his existence, and expiring with the envenomed sting in his heart; and all the terrors of hell in his conscience. The recollection of such a miserable exit is dreadful! God grant it never may be your lot nor mine. But say, Horatio,
 are

are not these ocular demonstrations fully sufficient to convince any reasonable man of the truth of what the word of God asserts; that the righteous have hope in their death; but the wicked are driven away in their wickedness? Perhaps you have never seen with what joy and triumph the former of these take their leave of time. But I know you have frequently seen the wicked die. Do you remember in what an awful manner our old acquaintance, Capt. R——, left us?

HORATIO.

Pray, don't mention it. The thought of that horrid scene always makes me tremble. I have never been able to think of death since, but with a degree of horror. Poor unhappy man! How perfectly sensible to the very last! Yet how diabolical his conduct! What unheard of imprecations! What excruciating agonies of mind! He seemed really to feel (according to his own expression) all the complicated miseries of the damned: and would not be persuaded but that it was the sure presage of his eternal condemnation. Sure, Eugenio, all worldly men do not die as he did?

EUGENIO.

EUGENIO.

But a great many do. I myself have seen several launch into eternity, in this awful manner. Some, indeed, act very differently: take no small pains to smother all thoughts of futurity; dare every danger; and hurry into it at a venture. Others deceive themselves with a false hope; relying on the mere mercy of God; when they have lived all their life-time in sin, and still retain the love of it in their hearts; never once forming an idea that justice is as essential a perfection of the Deity as mercy. Others, like the brute beast, die without any thought at all; ignorant that they have a soul; totally unconcerned about heaven or hell; neither wishing for the one, nor dreading the other. But you, nor any body else, ever saw the real christian (having the exercise of his reason) make such an awful exit as our late unhappy friend: nor even as any of these I have mentioned. A full proof this, that there must at least be something very valuable in true vital godliness. I will indeed readily allow, that all believers do not die equally happy, as to sensible enjoyment. Many are not blest with that full assurance of faith which thousands have experienced. But they all, more or less, have a well grounded hope, which supports them in, and carries them safely through, the dreary valley of death. Some are very forely thrust

thrust at by the enemy of souls, to the very brink of eternity; and get to heaven, as it were "with the skin of their teeth;" disputing every inch of the way. Others are naturally of such a timid, fearful disposition, and have such humbling views of their own utter depravity, that they can just cast themselves into the arms of their gracious Redeemer for shelter in this dread moment, and cry, "Lord, save me, or "I perish:" and here they are as perfectly secured as Paul was, when he could exult and say, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, "I have kept the faith, &c." Indeed some of the weaklings of the flock, of this latter description, just before they launch off, frequently shout victory through the blood of the Lamb; having the port of glory full in view. I have seen and heard them do it. And now, to draw the whole to a conclusion, I dare venture to affirm, that no man, who has been a witness to these different death-bed scenes (and has the use of his reason), but must take up the language of the covetous prophet, and say, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my latter end be like his." And what say you, Horatio?

HORATIO.

If wishing could effect this, then, perhaps, I might say so too: but, no doubt, I shall be told, there is something preparatory to so desirable an end, which must

must be first accomplished: and that, it is very likely, may not be altogether so agreeable to one, like me, who has so long walked in a contrary course. However I must do you justice, and frankly acknowledge, the arguments you have urged in favour of real piety, have greatly changed my sentiments of the state of those, who sincerely practise it. And very much lessened too, the good opinion I have hitherto entertained of those men of fashion, and advocates for pleasure, whose dissipated conduct I have, perhaps, too eagerly followed.

EUGENIO.

Then it is to be hoped, you will no longer act as most of them do; in the character of the devil's errand boy, running from place to place, impudently asserting in all companies, that truly religious people are a set of poor moping, melancholy drones, who never enjoy the rational pleasures of life; and are perfect strangers to all ideas of happiness. One of the most daring falsehoods that ever was forged in the bottomless pit; which the grand deceiver of souls takes particular care to propagate, by his emissaries, among all ranks of people, as a chief support to his infernal kingdom in this world. But I would fain hope, he is likely to lose one of his subjects to-day. What do you think about it, Horatio? Are you not almost tired of his service? I'm sure it is a very disagreeable

agreeable one. I found it so for many years; and am confident I could recommend you to a much better master.

HORATIO.

It is very probable I may exchange a few thoughts with you on this subject, when we have a little more leisure to discuss it thoroughly; but at present I must wish you a good morning, as I expect to find some company at home waiting for me, whom I promised to meet: but if you are disengaged to-morrow, I may, perhaps, give you a call.

EUGENIO.

I shall be glad to see you; but, just before we part, let me seriously beg of my dear Horatio to treasure up in his mind the substance of our present conversation, and examine closely for himself into the truth of this important and long established fact, "that the real christian is certainly the happiest of men." The voluptuary may for a time boast of his fleeting pleasures with an air of seeming triumph, but, surely, you and I both well know, from fatal experience, that they constantly end in disappointment, remorse, or despair; while the happy favourite of heaven, in possession of that precious jewel, the peace of God, which passes all understanding, has the exalted felicity
of

of knowing, from heart-felt experience, that his joys
are of the most pure and substantial nature. The keen-
edge of affliction cannot impair, nor the iron hand of
persecution suppress them; death itself, disarmed of its
sting, has no power to destroy, nor the grave to co-
ver them; ten thousand millions of ages will only
heighten and confirm what the immutable promise
and oath of the unchangeable God has eternally
secured; therefore he must of necessity, even in this
vale of tears, enjoy a strong and everlasting consola-
tion and good hope through grace.

10 EE 58

P I N T S of his to I shall be glad to
be the friend of my dear friends to be
up in his mind the highest of our hearts to be
taken and examine every for himself into the mind
of the heart and soul of the heart and soul
"The real Christian is a man who is not
The voluntary way for a heart of the heart
Gladness with an air of freedom and joy
you and I both well know from final experience
that they constantly and in different ways
or different while the happy favour of heaven is
position of that precious jewel the peace of God
which gives all understanding has the entire

